

# DISTRICT SCHOOL JOURNAL,

## FOR THE STATE OF NEW-YORK.

VOL. 1.] PROMOTE, AS AN OBJECT OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE, INSTITUTIONS FOR THE GENERAL DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE.—WASHINGTON. [NO. 6.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

GENEVA, OCTOBER 1, 1840.

50 CENTS PER ANNUM.

### DISTRICT SCHOOL JOURNAL.

EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY  
FRANCIS DWIGHT.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.—For a single copy Fifty Cents per annum, payable in all cases in advance.

ISRAEL POST, BOOK-SELLER, 88 BOWERY, AGENT.

NOTICE TO THE FRIENDS OF THE INDIGENT DEAF MUTES AND BLIND.—Office of Superintendent of Common Schools, Albany, August 8, 1840.

In the institution for the instruction of the blind, there are sixty-four vacancies for pupils to be supported and educated at the expense of the State, who are to be at least eight years of age, and not more than twenty-five.

In the institution for the deaf and dumb, there are about the same number of vacancies for pupils to be educated in the same manner, and who are not to be less than twelve nor more than twenty-five years old.

These vacancies are to be filled by selections, to be made by the Superintendent of Common Schools, from lists which the overseers of the poor of the several towns of the State are required by law to furnish him. The destitute and afflicted children, who are the objects of the liberality of the legislature, and their relations are not generally in a situation to know the humane provision that has been made for them; and of those parents who have the information, there are some who seem unwilling to trust their children to the care of others.

The Superintendent would therefore take this occasion to state, from personal knowledge acquired by visiting the institutions, that the pupils are well provided for in respect to food and lodging; that they receive regular medical attendance; that their moral and intellectual education is successfully prosecuted; that they experience all the kindness and attention which they could receive under the parental roof; and that they are regularly visited by the managers of the institutions, and by other humane citizens, who generously devote much time to that purpose. They enjoy all the comforts of home, the sympathy of their instructors, and of the society of the associates in misfortune; and are as happy as any children in the midst of their own families. A knowledge of these facts, it is hoped, will dispel all apprehensions that may be entertained with respect to the treatment of the pupils, to whom the State offers an education, and the means of acquiring trades by which they may hereafter support themselves.

The Superintendent therefore calls upon the overseers of the poor of the several towns in the State, to seek out the indigent blind and destitute deaf and dumb in their respective towns, and transmit their names and ages to this office, with the names of their parents, nearest relatives or guardians, and a certificate of the pecuniary inability of the children or their relatives to defray the expense of their board and tuition, which is one hundred and thirty dollars annually. If they are also unable to clothe them, a separate certificate of the overseers to that effect is to be forwarded; and the board of supervisors of the county will then be called upon to provide for the expense pursuant to law.

It is hoped that every humane citizen will interest himself in promoting the object of the legislature, by informing the friends and relatives of the afflicted subjects of this notice, of the opportunities thus offered them, and by rendering their assistance in the necessary applications to obtain them.

The next term of the institution for the deaf and dumb, commences on the 15th of September next; and that for the blind on the 1st of September. It is therefore important that applications for admission should be promptly made.

JOHN C. SPENCER,  
Superintendent of Common Schools.

### SUPERINTENDENT'S DECISIONS, &c.

#### Alteration of Joint Districts.

Where a district is composed of part of two or more towns, the joint action of the Commissioners of all the towns is necessary to a dissolution of such district; but their powers as a joint board, cease with such dissolution; and the separate Boards of Commissioners may then annex the inhabitants of each town to districts within such towns.

In the matter of the appeal of Lucius Kimberly, from the proceedings of the Commissioners of Common Schools of the town of Clarence, in the formation of District No. 19, in said town.

On the 20th of April last, the Commissioners of Common Schools of the towns of Newstead and Clarence, set off that part of joint district No. 4, in Clarence, and 2, in Newstead, which includes the appellant, together with some twenty others, without annexing them to any other district, and without the consent of, or notice in writing, to the Trustees, although a verbal notice was given to, and accepted by, one of them. On the same day, the Commissioners of Clarence alone, formed district No. 19, composed of the individuals so set off from the joint district in Clarence and Newstead, several inhabitants from district No. 5, in Clarence, and four inhabitants from two joint districts in Clarence and Lancaster, which

had been or were subsequently on the same day annexed to said district No. 19, by the Commissioners of Clarence and Lancaster. District No. 19 is composed wholly of inhabitants residing in Clarence.—The appellant contends that these proceedings are void, for irregularity:

1st. Because the inhabitants set off from the joint district in Clarence and Newstead, by the Commissioners of those towns, were not annexed by them to any other district.

2d. Because the Commissioners of Clarence alone had no authority to annex them to district No. 19 in that town; and

3d. Because no notice in writing of the alteration of joint district No. 4, in Clarence, and 2, in Newstead, was not served upon the Trustees of that district, and no consent given.

The merits of the alterations in the respective districts are not presented for examination by the appeal. The only question submitted is as to the regularity of the proceedings. I think the acts of the Commissioners were strictly in compliance with the law: A joint board was first formed, and the inhabitants intended to be annexed to the new district were set off from the joint districts; and then the Commissioners of Clarence, within whose separate jurisdiction the inhabitants thus formally detached from the joint districts reverted, proceeded very properly to annex them to the new district. This, in my opinion, was the true mode of procedure. The powers of the joint board ceased when the territory ceased to be a joint district.

The notice, however, was unquestionably deficient. The statute imperatively requires it to be in writing. This requisition of the law cannot be waived by the Trustees, for whose benefit it is intended, as it constitutes a part of the record of the proceedings, and is evidence of the fact should it afterwards be disputed. The alteration cannot, therefore, take effect until the expiration of three months from the service of such written notice upon the Trustees of the joint district, or one of them. The appeal is dismissed with permission to renew it upon the merits, whenever notice is legally given of the alteration. Given, &c., JOHN C. SPENCER,  
Superintendent of Common Schools.

#### Mode of Alteration in Joint Districts.

The opinion of the Superintendent of Common Schools has been requested upon the validity of an alteration of joint School District No. 9, composed partly of the town of Mayfield and partly of the town of Northampton, made with the consent of the Trustees of that district by the Commissioners of the same town, by setting off two inhabitants from said district No. 9 to district No. 8, in the town of Mayfield. The Commissioners of Northampton were not present, but subsequently, and within one month concurred in the alteration in writing, which was duly recorded. By section 20 (21) of the School Act, page 363, Com. School Dec. and Laws, it is provided that "whenever it may be necessary or convenient to form a district out of two or more adjoining towns, the Commissioners from each of such adjoining towns or the major part of them, may form, regulate and alter such district." By section 69 (65) page 378, provision is made for the dissolution of a joint district, so as to bring its component parts within the control of the Commissioners of each of the towns where they may be situated, in cases where the Commissioners of either refuse or neglect to attend after being duly notified, at a joint meeting, for the purpose of altering such district.

These two provisions, considered in connexion with each other, seem to contemplate a joint meeting of the Commissioners of all the towns interested, and the concurrence of a major part of them, at such joint meeting, in any alteration of a joint district.—But if there is a neglect or refusal after proper notice on the part of the Commissioners of any town, to meet those of the others, then section 69 provides for the case by empowering the Commissioners in attendance to call a special district meeting of the district, for the purpose of deciding on such proposed

alteration, giving to the decision of such meeting the same validity as though it had been made by the Commissioners of all the towns interested, but restricting its operation to a dissolution of the district formed from such towns. In the case submitted to the Superintendent, it does not appear that any attempt was made to procure a joint meeting. The Commissioners of Mayfield made the alteration, and the concurrence of the Commissioners of Northampton, was informally given after the lapse of several weeks.

The mode of procedure pointed out by the statute is specific and clear, and by following its directions, the object sought to be accomplished can readily be attained if in itself proper and desirable. Any other course seems to involve more or less difficulty and embarrassment: and it is not easy to define the exact boundaries where a departure from the strict requirements of the law may be safely tolerated. The Superintendent deems it advisable, therefore, as a general rule, to limit the discretion of officers of school districts, to the powers expressly conferred on them by the statute.

Under the peculiar circumstances of the present case, however, the Trustees of district No. 8 are hereby authorized to enumerate the children belonging to the two families set off from district No. 9 in reference to the ensuing distribution of public money in case they have since the order of the Commissioners of Mayfield and the concurrence of the Commissioners of Northampton, attended the school in district No. 8. And the Commissioners of the two towns are also authorized as soon as practicable after the receipt of this decision to meet together and make the alteration in due form of law.

J. C. SPENCER,  
Superintendent Com. Schools.

#### Change of Site of School-House.

Section 70 of the School Act, provides that "whenver a School-house shall have been built or purchased for a district, the site of such School-house shall not be changed, nor the building thereon be removed, as long as the district shall remain unaltered, unless by the consent in writing of the Commissioners of Common Schools, or a majority of them, of the town or towns within which such district shall be situated, stating that, in their opinion, such removal is necessary; nor then, unless two-thirds of all those present at a special meeting of such district, called for that purpose, and qualified to vote therein, shall vote for such removal, and in favor of such new site."

An erroneous construction of the requirements of this section has prevailed in many districts, which act upon the supposition that where an alteration is once made, after a School-house has been built or a site established, any subsequent change of site may be carried into legal effect by a majority vote, and without the certificate of the Commissioners. The object of the section is to prevent the renewed agitation of the question of site, after such site has once been established, so long as the district remains the same, unless by the consent of the Commissioners, and of two-thirds of the district. When, therefore, a district has been altered, after the original establishment of its site, either by adding to or diminishing from its territory, so that the site is no longer central and convenient, such site may then be changed by a majority vote merely, and without calling upon the Commissioners: but when such change has been effected, and a new site established, or a new house built or purchased by such majority vote, it cannot again be changed, until some further alteration in the boundaries of the district, without complying with the requisitions of the 70th and the two succeeding sections.

JOHN C. SPENCER

The representatives of a deceased person are not entitled to any delay in the payment of a rate-bill or tax-list, but are bound to pay it on demand, and on refusal or neglect, the collector may proceed to sell any property found on the premises. By Sec. 27, 2 Rev. Stat. 28, Subdiv. 2, taxes of all kinds have preference to any other demand. JOHN C. SPENCER.

**Taxation of the Property of Non-residents:—Powers of Collectors, beyond their Districts.**

With reference to the questions proposed in your letter, I answer, that the property of a non-resident cannot be taxed unless it be improved and occupied, and actually cleared and cultivated; Sec. 86 and 88, School Act. In the case stated, where the lots are not occupied by a tenant, and are not improved and cultivated, but merely enclosed by a fence, they are not taxable for school district purposes.

Where land is rented, the tenant only can be taxed for it. Where there is an agent or servant occupying, who does not pay rent, the owner is taxable, if the property is improved and cultivated.

In regard to the enquiry whether the collector may go out of his district to levy on personal property of the owner of a non-resident lot, or the owner of a lot in a district in which he does not actually reside, you will find the subject very fully examined by my predecessor, Gen. Dix, at page 337, Common School Decisions. But it is with deep regret I feel compelled to differ with him in the second class of cases, where town collectors are to collect. I think if A. owns land in District No. 3 in Rochester, cultivated and improved or occupied by an agent, and resides himself in another town in the same county, the collector may levy on his property where he resides: but not if he resides in another county. I suppose the distinction to be between actual residence, which is the test in respect to town collectors, and legal or implied residence under the school law; and that although a person may, for purposes of taxation for schools, be deemed an inhabitant of a district, yet he may also be an actual inhabitant of another town in the same county. Indeed, Gen. Dix's argument would prove too much, for it would make a person living in the remotest part of the State an inhabitant actually: and then §89 would not apply, authorizing a suit only in cases where the person taxed does not reside in the district, and residence and inhabitancy being identical, if he is an inhabitant of the district, he is a resident. But presuming the distinction between an actual resident and a legal inhabitant for certain purposes, removes all difficulty.

If the Trustees have assessed any taxes contrary to these views, the errors may be corrected and the money refunded upon application to the Superintendent under Sec. 5 of Chapter 330, Laws of 1839, of which you have a copy.

J. C. SPENCER,  
Superintendent Com. Schools.

**Contracts with Teachers.**

Where a teacher agrees with the Trustees for a specific sum, and to collect his own bills, he will be held to his agreement; unless the Trustees choose voluntarily to waive it, and to collect the amount due in the usual mode. But the teacher has no legal means of enforcing such collection, except in cases where the inhabitants sending to school knew of the existence and terms of the contract between the teacher and trustees; in which cases an implied contract may perhaps be presumed to pay the teacher.

JOHN C. SPENCER.

**REMARKS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT ON THE REPORTS OF VISITERS.**

**CONCLUDED.**

Besides, in many cases, it must happen that the amount of tuition, from the payment of which the indigent are exempted, exceeds the sum apportioned to the district. One effect of the present system, undeniably, is to reduce and limit the range of exemption. The trustees who are to make it, are generally, if not universally, among those who send children to school; and they are thus called upon to put their hands into their own pockets for a public purpose. Upon no one subject in the whole administration of the school law, have the complaints been so strong and so numerous as upon this; and from some of the county visitors, the representation of its inequality, injustice and injurious consequences, have been ardent and decided. The Superintendent, therefore, unhesitatingly recommends, that the tuition chargeable to the children of indigent parents, be raised by tax in the same manner as the repairs of school houses are defrayed; and that the trustees be authorized to exempt from the payment of a specified portion of the tuition charges, as well as from the whole. There are many persons, in indigent circumstances, who are still able to defray a portion of the charges for the education of their children; and there are others who, from proper considerations of self-respect, would prefer paying a part of such expenses, rather than be indebted for the whole to the

public bounty. Such a discrimination would often be an act of justice to the district.

12. A provision by which trustees should be elected for a longer term, and so that one only should go out of office in each year. The experience of this office commends this suggestion as a very valuable one.—When an entirely new set of trustees come into office, they are ignorant of and find it extremely difficult to become acquainted with the contracts and arrangements of their predecessors, and particularly with the state of their accounts. The business of the district is frequently deranged, and conflicts between the old and new trustees are not uncommon, in consequence of the latter not knowing the grounds and reasons of the previous arrangements of the former. A year's acquaintance with the duties of the office gives the incumbent much greater facilities in the discharge of them. While the board would be thus renovated whenever circumstances required it, there would remain information, experience and intelligence to continue a system; and thus the petty broils that disturb a district and which are fed by the expectation of change, would cease for the want of opportunity.

The same remarks are applicable in a great degree to the election of commissioners. But there is one feature in this case which renders a similar provision in respect to them exceedingly desirable. Their election is too often connected with the party politics of the day, and a board of excellent and experienced commissioners is often succeeded by new and inexperienced men, who are thrown into their place in the fluctuation of politics. If the term of office was extended so that one should expire in each year, a more permanent board would be obtained, and the hope might be indulged that candidates would be selected more in reference to their qualifications than to their political opinions. At all events there would not be so large a number involved in the vortex of party politics, and the chances would be in the term of three years that all parties would be represented in the board. This circumstance alone would inspire confidence in their acts, and be apt to induce a general desire to continue such an arrangement. Instances have occurred in which the alteration of a district has been made the ground of electing commissioners who have succeeded and immediately reversed the proceedings of their predecessors. The corrective power of this department has indeed been applied, but the contentions and hostilities which were thus produced have not been allayed.

The principle referred to has been adopted in relation to justices of the peace, who are chosen for four years, one in each year, and it is conceived that the reasons for applying it to commissioners of common schools are at least equally cogent.

13. The establishment of county boards of education, and of town, county and State associations for the improvement of common school education.

Such associations will doubtless be of great value. Their formation, however, must be voluntary, by the enlightened and patriotic who feel the deep importance of the subject. The only legislative provision which could promote such associations would be one authorizing them to incorporate themselves in the same manner as religious societies. Such societies would be boards of education to a great extent. The county visitors who may be appointed under the existing laws will also constitute such boards, and thus the unity and harmony of the system be preserved. The Superintendent has no confidence in the utility of boards or bodies of men for executive purposes. Practically the duties will be performed by some one, while the responsibility will be divided and diminished; and if not so performed there will necessarily be a want of concert in action, community of plan and vigor of execution, that would be fatal to the system. Instances might be referred to, without difficulty, where the purposes of Legislatures have failed from the inactivity inseparable from the movements of a body of men. So far as counsel and information are desirable, they would be obtained from the boards before indicated. The Superintendent would deeply lament any attempt to clothe them with any other power.

14. The establishment in cities and populous places of schools of different grades under the charge of a local superintendent.

The trustees of districts have now full authority to establish schools of any grade or grades in their respective districts. But as one district might not be able alone to maintain a school of high grade, it might be useful to allow several districts to unite for such a purpose. The danger would be the diversion of the public school money from its primary object,

the education of children, and particularly of the indigent, in the elementary departments, and appropriating it to the higher grade. Should any such proposition be entertained, it should be guarded so as to prevent abuse, and like the union of districts for the purchase of libraries, it should be done only with the approbation of the Superintendent, and subject to his control. A local superintendent has been created in the city of Buffalo, and judging from the reports of the schools in that city, as well as from other sources of information, it is believed that the plan has been eminently successful. But instead of a general law, perhaps it would be better to wait for applications for such an officer from the cities and villages interested. Still no injury could arise from a general provision authorizing the common councils of cities and the trustees of villages to appoint such an officer whenever they should deem it expedient.

The numerous appeals which have come before the Superintendent, and the constant applications for advice and direction, have exhibited to him some defects in the law, which he will now proceed to state. The necessary provisions to remedy these defects are contained in the draft of a bill which will be submitted to the proper committee. Many of them relate to details apparently unimportant. But experience has shown that every defect or ambiguity in the law is but the occasion for controversy and litigation. In the administration of a system where so many subordinate agents are employed, it is due to them that they should not be exposed to prosecutions in consequence of any deficiency in the Statute which is their guide.

The remarks already made in reference to the suggestions of the Board of County Visitors, will explain the views of the Superintendent in relation to many of the provisions submitted. Many others it is supposed will be so obviously proper as not to require remark. The observations of the Superintendent will therefore now be confined to a few that are deemed most important.

The qualifications of voters at district meetings are not well defined by the existing law, and it has admitted of a construction the propriety of which is very questionable, and which it is believed could scarcely have been contemplated. A single man transiently in a district who may have been assessed within two years a single day's work on the highway, has been held to be a competent voter in relation to the imposition of taxes to which he does not contribute, and to the management of a school in which he has no personal interest. On the other hand, persons who are most deeply interested in the school in consequence of sending their children, and who pay rate bills for their instruction, are debarred from any voice in its management. The section on that subject will remove the ambiguities in the existing law, and admit to the right of voting, those only who have any interest in the schools, or are liable to contribute to their support.

As the trustees of districts are immediately amenable to the commissioners, there is an impropriety in the same person holding both offices; and the same remark applies to the district clerk, collector, and librarian. By the decision of this department, the latter offices have been held incompatible with that of trustee; but it should be declared by law.

The existing law which exempts from taxation in the district where it is situated, a portion of a farm or property belonging to the resident of an adjoining district, gives occasion to continual difficulties in its application. It is often impossible to determine whether a tract of land forms part of an entire farm, and no provision has occasioned so many appeals, applications for advice and litigation as the one in question. It operates as a temptation to ask for alterations which will bring into a district an individual of extensive property for the mere purpose of increasing the taxable resources of the district, while it diminishes the means and disturbs the arrangements of the district from which such property is withdrawn. The simple rule of taxing all property within the boundaries of a district, will give more general satisfaction, remove the difficulties in executing the present law, and promote the quiet and harmony of the districts.

Persons who work land on shares, cannot be classed under either of the descriptions in the present law, as owning or possessing such land. A declaratory provision seems indispensable.

It is quite doubtful in what cases a district collector can now execute his warrant out of his district. No possible objection is perceived to his possessing the same powers in another district or town.

As the law has provided a simple remedy, without



any expense to the parties, for any wrongs committed by trustees or other officers charged with duties in relation to the schools, it would seem but an act of justice to those officers to shield them from the vexation of lawsuits, as far as may be consistent with constitutional provisions. An appeal to the Superintendent enables the officers who may have committed an unintentional error, to avail themselves of his advice, and immediately to repair it, without exposing them personally to the costs and expenses of litigation. The section which denies costs to any plaintiff resorting to the courts, when he could obtain complete relief from the tribunal established as an umpire in such cases, is intended to repress the litigious spirit which unfortunately too often exhibits itself in prosecutions for mere technical errors or unintentional omissions. JOHN C. SPENCER,

Superintendent of Common Schools.  
Secretary's Office, April 13, 1840.

**REPORT OF THE BOARD OF VISITERS,  
FOR THE COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER.**

*Sing-Sing, Jan. 15, 1840.*

TO JOHN C. SPENCER, Esq.,  
Superintendent of Common Schools:

Dear Sir: By direction of the meeting of School Visitors in and for the County of Westchester, I herewith offer to you some of the views of said Visitors.

The visitation has not been as general as could have been wished in the several towns; but in a number of the towns the work has been pretty thoroughly done, as I trust you will by this time see, by the reports transmitted to you.

In the course of the visitation, many defects in the practice of trustees and teachers were discoverable, which must be corrected before the system, in our opinion, can produce its proper and legitimate results; and while we feel our own imperfections, and perhaps inability to judge with the perfection of wisdom, we feel induced to offer, on the invitation in the instructions, a few suggestions for the consideration of the Superintendent, and some thoughts, which perhaps may lead to legislative action on the subject.

The present system of education in common schools, in our view, requires to be strictly construed and faithfully carried out, in order to have its due and desired effect; and therefore an uniformity of practice is highly important; and yet we found that in several schools the trustees had so far departed from the letter and spirit of the statute and the system, as to engage the teacher at a certain sum per scholar, and leave him to collect himself as much as he could of his earnings in this way, and lose or sacrifice the remainder—he being forbid by statute to sue therefor. Others engage a teacher only so long as the public money will pay him, and leave the school vacant the remainder of the year; while a third class engage their teacher as cheaply as they can, and then apply the public money to the liquidation of the school bills, equally, without any regard to the ability of the parents to pay; and neglecting altogether to secure the attendance of the children of indigent parents in the district, and making no provision for their education.

The evil of the first course, of giving up the school entirely to the teacher's collections, &c., is conceived to be, that it fails to secure a permanent school, and practically excludes the children of the poor; or, if they attend school, they are not attended to as they ought to be, because the teacher feels that he is to receive nothing for instructing them. Their feelings are also often unnecessarily wounded, by improper expressions and allusions, which have a very injurious effect upon the progress of scholars. This should not be allowed, inasmuch as it is considered contrary to the school law, which requires that teachers be employed by the month. All the children of a district are to be invited to attend; and of those who do attend, the trustees are to determine the exemptions; pay the amount of public money in their hands devoted to that portion of the year, and levy the balance due the teacher on the remaining scholars, and collect the same by the regular teacher of the district.

In the opinion of the visitors, this course is measurably indispensable to the right management and success of the schools, and they believe that positive instructions to this effect from the Superintendent would greatly promote the usefulness and permanency of our common schools.

There ought to be uniformity, and a strict compliance with the law in the employment of teachers, and the collection of their wages.

The next plan, of applying the public money to the bills of all who send, leaving the children of the

poor wholly unprovided for, is very objectionable, and shows the sinister side of human nature in no very flattering light. Men having thousands at their command, are found grasping after this poor pittance, which justly belongs to the poor, and make it a point to send their children to an indifferent teacher, merely because the public money will go further in paying their children's schooling. This course is not expected to find any favor from enlightened philanthropy, and must expect severe reprehension from the Superintendent, who, it is presumed, will utterly repudiate such a course, as in no respect consonant with the objects of the law, and our system of education.

The latter practice is but a slight remove from the foregoing, and will also be condemned by the wise councils that at present urge onward this important system of instruction, and are, with patriotic devotion to the true interests of their country and their fellow beings, making efficient efforts to improve and enlarge the sphere of its usefulness to the rising generation.

Other topics in relation to our common schools, also engaged the attention of the meeting of visitors; and the sentiments of some (and of the number the writer is one,) went so far as to propose and advocate, that the law establishing a school fund in the several towns in this State, be so far amended as to levy, as is now done, or by a vote annually taken by the towns, a sum sufficient to sustain qualified teachers in all the districts therein, throughout the year, after the manner it is done in the city of New-York. It is respectfully conceived and submitted, that by such a course the progress of the scholars would be much greater, the time required to obtain their education would be much less, in the aggregate, and their usefulness to society would commence at an earlier period of life. No very precise calculations of the required amount of such tax has been made by those who support it; but it is believed that three times the present amount of the school fund would be nearly or quite sufficient to secure this desirable course; and if so, then surely the parents and taxpayers will find their advantage in adopting it; for less time will be consumed in acquiring a common education, which in many places is spread over eight or ten years,—and these youth will be earlier contributing their quota to the industry and productiveness of the country.

The Superintendent is respectfully requested to consider this suggestion, and if there be no very strong reasons against its adoption, to submit it to the consideration of the Legislature, with such reasons in its favor as may present themselves to his own mind. If it be urged, that this would be taxing the whole community for the education of children not in many cases their own, it is answered, that such a tax would not be more unequal than that by which the present amount of school money is raised; and in the case of those who have children and send them to the district schools, and have property also, it would be only requiring them to pay for their children's schooling, which they ought to do; and moreover, those who have property and no children, can surely afford to pay their proportion towards educating the children that may exist in their community. This course operates well in the city of New-York; and there can be certainly very little objection to it in the country. There is nothing half-so onerous and unjust in it, as that provision of the present law, which demands of the hard working man, who by his industry and prudence, is enabled to pay for the instruction of five or six of his own children, if he is blessed with so many, to pay as much more to make up the teacher's wages, or the deficiencies of delinquents, while the rich and stubborn, who for slight cause or pique, refuse to send to school, and thereby escapes from paying at all, and in a great measure, and often entirely, defeats the benevolent designs of the school law. This feature of the present law, seems rather to be a tax upon the public spirit and honorable independence that supports the cause of education, than an encouragement to it. Again; it is the proper province of education to promote the happiness, welfare and security of society, and like a well-regulated government, which secures order, peace and property to its possessors, has an undoubted and rightful claim upon the community for support in the most efficient manner that can be devised. The additional amount of the public money derived by means of the surplus revenue, has given an onward and accelerated movement to the cause of education throughout the State, and no doubt can be reasonably entertained that a corresponding advancement will be made upon the adoption of the enlarged policy here suggested.

It may occur to some, at first view, that this would give our common schools the character of charity schools; not more so, on reflection, however, than they now are in the city; and there, in fact, every man having property, pays his proportion towards educating his own children, graduated in amount to what is required to educate the whole juvenile population. Nor is it less so in the country, for every man there able to pay is required to do so; and it matters very little whether such money is collected under a vote of the town, or at the end of a "rate bill." And after all, it has been seen, by the visitors, as recited in the early part of this letter, that all men are not so very punctilious about receiving a gratuity under the statute, for "able" men have gravely voted the public money designed for the indigent, to be applied to their own school-bills, and this, too, without severe compunctions of conscience, or any humiliating emotions, on partaking of such public charity. At all events, there can be effected, it is believed, a salutary amendment in the present law, in such a manner, that the property in a district shall be taxed to pay the deficit of the teacher's wages, for wood, &c., and not any longer be confined to those who had already borne their full share of his support.

The visitors, who met on the 1st instant, appreciated the views and efforts of the Superintendent, in his instructions to them, and cheerfully contributed their humble exertions to the good cause, and would be gratified had they been able more fully to accomplish his wishes, and fulfil his directions; but they feel conscious that much remains to be done before our own common schools can attain that favor and confidence in the community which they can command under a judicious system of visitation and inspection. They believe also that direct and positive instructions to trustees, as to their duty, is particularly required at the present time, to secure a proper administration of the law and the application of the public money to its proper objects; and they hope the Superintendent will issue explicit and full directions, as to the manner in which teachers are to be employed and paid; the children of indigent parents to be exempted; and such other instructions as may be necessary to effect a reform, as well as uniformity in the application of the law. The evil of the divers modes of managing these matters, has been already referred to: an example or two may be proper here. In the village of Sing-Sing there are 840 children, and the public money for the teacher is this year \$356. The trustees engage a qualified teacher to take the school on his own risk, at \$1.50 per scholar per quarter, together with the public money. He commences school, and at the end of his quarter or term, he makes out his bills, and sends them home with the scholars, with directions to bring the money; and in default of which they are not unfrequently told, it is feared, that they must pay, or they can not be taught longer there; this sounds harshly on the ears of sensitive mothers that are poor; and many fathers of such children care little about their education, and they remain away. Thus the very ones for whom the public fund is provided, do not enjoy its advantages, while in the instance before us, there is nearly enough received to pay for the entire yearly schooling of the aggregate number in attendance, (75.) There is, in this case, a lamentable neglect of the requirements of the law, as to designation of exempt children, in procuring the attendance of the children of indigent parents; and in securing the payment of the teachers' bills. One teacher that had taught this school, declared that when he left the school there were bills unpaid to the amount of \$100, for which he could get nothing from the trustees.—Another case, in which the trustees are believed to be departing from duty, exists in this town. The trustees engaged a teacher, at \$2 per scholar per quarter, and gave notice that all would be expected to pay that sum, if they attended that school. The consequence is, that not a single child of the indigent receives instruction in that school; and yet the trustees admit there are many such in their bounds. Instructions from the Superintendent, as to their duty in such cases, it is believed would have a salutary effect upon these schools. But I must bring this already too much extended communication to a close. The Superintendent will observe, by the copy of the "Westchester Herald" which has been transmitted to him, that the visitors, at their meeting, organized a society, upon principles which they hope will be useful to the cause, and would be happy to receive any suggestions which the Superintendent may think proper to make, as to their organization and mode of operation; and they would be glad of a copy or two of his annual report, when published.

CALEB ROSCOE, Secretary.

## DISTRICT SCHOOL JOURNAL.

GENEVA, N. Y., OCTOBER 1, 1840.

Having spread before the public the principal Reports of the Visitors of Common Schools, we now turn to the Academic Reports, made to the Regents of the University, for additional information on the science of education, as understood and practised in the State Academies. We shall preface our "extracts" with a brief summary of the condition of this department of our great educational system.

This Schedule exhibits the Comparative View of the number of Academies from which Annual Reports have been received, for the last six years, with the whole number of students instructed in them, and the number considered as classical students, or students in the higher branches of English education, as stated in said reports.

Years in which reports have been received.	No. of academies making reports.	Whole No. of scholars reported.	No. of do. considered as classical.	Whole am't of public money distributed.	Highest rate per scholar in any dist.	Lowest rate per scholar in any dist.	Rate per scholar, if distribution had been made without reference to districts.
1835, - - -	64	5,296	3,741	\$12,000	\$4 84	\$1 82	\$3 21
1836, - - -	65	5,548	4,017	12,000	4 73	1 64	2 98
1837, - - -	69	6,056	4,563	12,000	5 95	1 75	2 63
1838, - - -	74	6,391	5,046	12,000	5 93	1 32	2 35
1839, - - -	106	10,111	7,070	40,000	9 49	3 79	5 66
1840, - - -	119	10,881	8,842	40,000	8 36	3 43	4 62

The rate per scholar, if the apportionment had been made for the whole State, without reference to districts, would have been about \$4.52.

Albany, February 29, 1840.

G. HAWLEY, Secretary, &amp;c.

The foot-note reminds us of the strenuous efforts often made to change the principle of distribution, on the ground of inequality. It not being duly considered that the higher rates in certain districts will ne-

cessarily induce the establishment of more academies, and thus aid in diffusing equally the benefits of the system throughout every district in the State. Beside, if the apportionment depended on the number of

scholars, each academy would be tempted to relax its discipline and lower its requisitions, that its full roll of pupils might draw largely from the public funds.

NAMES OF ACADEMIES.	No. of students belonging to the department at the date of the report.	No. connected with the department for a period not exceeding one quarter.	Exceeding one and not exceeding two quarters.	Exceeding two and not exceeding three quarters.	Exceeding three and not exceeding four quarters.	Exceeding four quarters.	Annual expense incurred on account of the department.	Charge for Tuition.	Price of board, &c.	Amount received from the Regents of the University, or otherwise, as endorsement.
Montgomery Academy, - - -	40	22	32	33	40		\$500 00	\$30 00	not stated.	\$309 00
Erasmus Hall Academy, - - -										
Amenia Seminary, - - -										
Kinderhook Academy, - - -	14	8	7	1	6	1	122 50		\$150 per annum, including tuition.	2,477 00
Troy Female Academy Department, not established until December, - - -										
Albany Female Academy, department not organized until October, - - -										
St. Lawrence Academy, - - -	104	39	16	24	14	11	1,200 00	\$12 per ann.		368 00
Washington Academy, - - -	20	18	2				400 00	1 50 per term.	\$1 75 per week.	416 00
Fairfield Academy, - - -	38	11	19	3	3	2		1 50 "	1 50 "	
Cortland Academy, - - -	28	28					300 00	5 00 "	1 50 "	
Ithaca Academy, no report, - - -										
Oxford Academy, - - -	44	25	16	2	1		600 00	Gratuitous.	1 75 "	
Canandaigua Academy, - - -	50	25	25				500 00	\$4 00 per term.	1 50 "	400 00
Genesee Wesleyan Seminary, - - -	110	29	63	18			500 00			400 00
Rochester Collegiate Institute, - - -	10	6	4					same as others.		
Middlebury Academy, - - -	40		4	5	17	14	400 00	half price.		
	498	211	188	86	81	28	4,522 50			

Abstract of the Reports from the several Academies in which Departments for the Education of Common School Teachers have been established by the Regents of the University, showing the condition of said departments during the year 1839.

G. HAWLEY, Secretary, &amp;c.

The Superintendent remarks in relation to these Departments, "that by the 4th section of chap. 241, laws of 1837, the institutions in which departments for the instruction of common school teachers are or shall be established, are required to make annual reports to the Superintendent of Common Schools in such form and containing such information as he may from time to time require, and in respect to the organization and management of such departments and the course of studies to be pursued therein, they are to be governed by such directions as he may prescribe. Although several matters have been suggested, and others have occurred to the Superintendent as improvements in the system of organization and management of these departments, yet he has not sufficiently matured them to justify their introduction. He has, therefore, not made any changes

in the regulations heretofore prescribed. Circulars were addressed to all the academies above enumerated, prescribing the form of a report and the nature of the information which it should contain. No report, whatever, has been received from the Ithaca Academy. The act does not appear to make the report a necessary condition to entitle an academy to any further distribution from the Literature Fund, nor does it impose any other forfeiture or penalty for disobedience to its injunctions. It is submitted whether some provision is not necessary to ensure such a return as will enable the Legislature and officers having charge of the subject, to ascertain whether the public bounty has been faithfully expended.

The return from Erasmus Hall Academy, in the county of Kings, states that a department for the instruction of common school teachers was established

in October last, by the trustees, and that the regular teachers in the academy are required to give instruction in this department. The trustees have agreed to charge the scholars who enter it considerably less than is charged to the ordinary students of the academy. No students have applied for admission to the department, and there are none in it.

The trustees of the Amenia Seminary, in the county of Dutchess, return, that since receiving the instructions of the regents, in June last, in consequence of improving and enlarging their buildings, they have not been in a condition to organize a department until December last. They have had a systematic course for the instruction of teachers, for two or three years past, but have not given it the character of a distinct department; that a large number have been qualified to act as teachers in that institution; and



that of the number so qualified 43 are and have been engaged during the last year in school teaching.—They say that the demands for teachers, during the last fall particularly, have been so numerous that they have been unable to meet them.

The returns from the Troy Female Seminary, and from the Albany Female Academy, are annexed to this Report, and are marked F. and G. These institutions are peculiar, as it is supposed that the ordinary course of instruction pursued in them, is in itself sufficiently adapted to prepare female teachers of schools. From the knowledge of the Superintendent of the character and extent of the studies pursued in these institutions, and the eminent ability of their teachers, he is bound to say that better means of qualifying young ladies to become teachers, cannot be found.

We shall now add from the Academic Reports, brief extracts of such suggestions as may be most generally useful to Teachers.

#### RUTGERS FEMALE INSTITUTE.

**Mode of Study.**—This is analytical. At recitations, classes are required not only to recite the lesson for the day, but also to give an analysis of other portions of the book, previously recited; so that by constantly reviewing, they shall be able, at the conclusion of a week, to give a general outline, as well as a particular account of the whole.

In Logic, Rhetoric, Mental and Moral Philosophy, ideas, rather than the words of an author, are required. On these and the Mathematics, do we chiefly depend for the development of the reasoning powers. For the cultivation of the memory, reliance is placed upon dates, facts, rules, axioms, principles, formulas, which are committed memoriter, and upon the Latin and French Languages. Constant use is made of black boards.

In the study of Geography, we have found essential benefit in requiring the pupils to draw maps.—This is done very neatly and accurately upon paper, before coming to recitation; and at recitation two or more, while others are reciting, go to the black board, and from recollection, draw an outline of the country they are studying, together with its principal mountains, rivers, towns, &c. In this way localities become indelibly fixed in the mind. This is done by the highest five departments.

#### GOVERNMENT.

Our government is "parental." In all cases of impropriety of deportment, appeals are made to the judgment and moral feelings of the pupil, which are usually successful in restoring order. Our great weapon, which acts as a conservative principle, is the "Merit Roll, or "Class Book," in which a daily account is kept of every scholar's attendance, scholarship and deportment, a report from which is read every Friday afternoon, in public, embracing the names of those only who have been perfect in all three respects. It is understood in the Institution that these Class Books are to be preserved, and that they will probably be consulted years hence by friends. The effect of which is, that an ardent desire is awakened and vigorous efforts made to mark among the first.

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

Our edifice, by its elevation and proximity to the river, its spacious halls, large windows with sliding sashes from above and below, and its open area around, affords ample means for ventilation. There is not a bench in the Institution, but chairs are furnished, to prevent the unhappy results attendant upon a disregard to the position of the body at school.—Physiology is taught our young ladies, particularly that part of it which relates to the promotion of health and the prevention of disease.

#### DELAWARE LITERARY INSTITUTE.

**Pronunciation.**—The greatest possible attention is paid to the pronunciation of each scholar. All provincialisms are pointed out as they occur, and the correct pronunciation is given according to the best usage. All inaccuracies are observed and commented upon. The same is true of grammatical errors.

#### EXTENT OF STUDY MEMORITER OR BY ROTE.

Definitions, enunciations and dates, we think should be committed. Every thing else should be recited intelligibly and understandingly; not in the words of the author, but in such language as a thorough examination of the subject will suggest. We disregard all questions affixed by authors to our text-books.—We aim to cultivate the memory and judgment in subserviency to each other.

#### TROY FEMALE SEMINARY.

In regard to modes of teaching, believing that every teacher will be most successful in her own original method of making truth interesting and impressive, we insist only on the end of her office being accomplished. We require her to lead the minds of her pupils to a thorough knowledge of the subject, to habits of independent investigation, to draw out their capabilities, to infuse into their minds the love of truth, and to seek to establish habits of profound and persevering study. For this training of the mind, it is indispensable that the teacher should have skill and address, talents and learning in her several departments of instruction, and also those moral qualities which are necessary to the energetic and conscientious discharge of her duties.

Our government is of the parental kind. It rests less on penalties for the violation of law, than on the affection and mutual confidence existing between teachers and pupils, with a conviction of impartial justice; the removal of temptations to do wrong, and the regulation of the opinion of our little public. We endeavor to establish self-government. A conscientious regard to right, and a reference of all actions to the will of God, is cherished in the pupils; they are then treated with confidence; not being continually watched, but sufficiently guarded to detect errors of conduct. The general tone of moral feeling is such as to make cheerful submission to necessary and wholesome restraints easy.

It is an established usage to admit annually a certain number of young ladies who are desirous of preparing themselves for teachers, but are unable to meet the necessary expenses of such preparation, allowing them credit for the amount thus incurred, until they can discharge the debt by the avails of their own efforts in teaching. More than 100 have received instruction on these conditions during the last year.

Fifty-four have been sent out as teachers since the 1st of January, 1839. Of this number, one is in New-Hampshire, one in Vermont, one in Connecticut, one in Massachusetts, one in Mississippi, three in Alabama, one in Florida, two in Maryland, two in Tennessee, three in North Carolina, three in South Carolina, four in Georgia, four in Pennsylvania, five in Ohio, eight in the higher schools of New-York, and fourteen in Virginia.

To be continued.

#### COMMISSIONERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS.

##### SCHOOL LAW.

§ 22. [Sec. 23.] In making the apportionment of moneys among the several school districts, no share shall be allotted to any district, part of a district, or separate neighborhood, from which no sufficient annual report shall have been received, for the year ending on the last day of December, immediately preceding the apportionment.

§ 23. [Sec. 24.] No moneys shall be apportioned and paid to any district or part of a district, unless it shall appear by such report, that a school had been kept therein for at least four months, during the year ending at the date of such report, by a qualified teacher; and that all moneys received from the commissioners during that year, have been applied to the payment of the compensation of such teacher.

##### LIBRARY REGULATIONS.

XIII. Commissioners of Common Schools cannot pay over any Library money to the Trustees of a District in the following cases:

1st. If a Catalogue, as required by Article XI, has not been delivered to them:

2d. If the number of books belonging to its Library is not stated in the Annual Report of the Trustees:

3d. If it does not clearly appear from such Report that the whole of the Library money paid to such District the preceding year, has been expended in the purchase of books. No part of the Library money can be applied to the purchase of a case for the books. These are "the like conditions" referred to in the Act authorizing the apportionment of public money to District Libraries:

4th. Whenever it appears that any District has expended any portion of its Library money in the purchase of any text book used in schools, such as spelling books, arithmetics, or grammars, or any book clearly improper to be admitted into a District Library.

We ask attention to these important provisions.—They are the principal checks on a careless and ruinous local administration of School affairs, and if

unenforced, the munificent State fund may be utterly wasted. There is, we are aware, an unwillingness to insist upon all the provisions of the law, in cases where the Board have reason to place a general confidence in the Trustees of the district. It seems, perhaps, needlessly rigorous to require, for example, a catalogue of all the books in the Library, in order to draw Library money anew. But in these and all similar cases, the Board on examination will find the most urgent reasons, independent of their responsibilities as Commissioners of the public fund, for conforming strictly to the letter of the law. In the case referred to, how can they satisfy themselves that the books bought by the State, and belonging to the State, have not been lost or abused by the district? or whether useful and suitable works have been purchased, unless a catalogue is made out and examined by the Commissioners?

The great defect in our system is the want of a watchful, local superintendence. To this is owing its unequal, irregular and sometimes feeble action, and it is therefore important that the Commissioners should, so far as it is in their power, by a firm and exact discharge of their duties, give to it greater vigor. If the Trustees find that every requisition of the law must be complied with, few difficulties will arise, as the regulations of the Department are both reasonable and simple.

In another point of view, this is important. The Inspectors sometimes feel bound to reject applicants for schools, with whom Trustees have already made a bargain. In this case, the disappointment of the rejected teacher is shared by the Trustees, who perhaps find it difficult to supply his place, and are in danger of losing the public money. In such a case, we have known a slight departure from the usual form of the Report, by which it was left doubtful, whether the public money was ever paid to qualified teachers or not. The Commissioners, however, received the report, and paid over the money. Thus authorizing a departure from the regulations of the Department, and preparing the way for farther irregularities, in managing the affairs of the district. In this, as in all other matters, the right course is the only expedient one, and no considerations should tempt either an evasion or neglect of the strict requisitions of the law.

#### ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

##### ABSTRACT

OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL RETURNS for 1838-9, Boston: Dutton & Wentworth, Printers to the State: 1839.

Third Annual Report of the Board of Education, together with the Third Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board: Boston, 1840.

In the present awakened state of the public mind in reference to Education, every thing connected with the details of the Common School system, becomes peculiarly interesting. The indifference which has heretofore prevailed on a subject now admitted to be of such fundamental importance, is indeed surprising; but not more so than the disregard manifested towards a variety of other subjects closely connected with the development and cultivation of the intellectual and moral faculties of our nature. The truth is, the great principles which lie at the foundation of the improvement of our species, have not been brought home to the doors of the multitude with a force at all proportioned to their importance, or in a manner adapted to their clear comprehension. The most ignorant are, as a general rule, the most selfish. Now, strange as it may seem, an effectual appeal to this very principle of selfishness, was all that was requisite to induce in minds thus constituted, not only serious inquiry, but energetic action, in the direction leading to the portals of knowledge and wisdom.—Convince the individual who aspires to nothing higher than mere worldly wealth, and who lives, apparently for no other or greater object than the gratification of his animal nature, that the enjoyment of uninterrupted health depends upon the observance of cer-

tain conditions, the greater part of which are subject to his own control, and he becomes at once a student of physiology, and will, in due time, in all human probability, ascend in the scale of intellect and civilization, until he becomes an enlightened and useful member of society. Convince him, also, that the uniform practice of virtue and morality, in all the varied relations of life, is not only compatible with the acquisition and enjoyment of wealth, and the rational gratification of the physical appetites and wants, but absolutely indispensable to their continued and secure enjoyment, and he becomes at once a moral and benevolent man. In like manner, convince the most careless and indifferent individual that the present and future happiness of his children is placed in a great measure at his own disposal—that at every stage of their progress towards the maturity of manhood, it is in his power to give such a direction to their ductile minds as will in all probability, ensure their welfare in all coming time, while it promotes their present enjoyment; and that for any neglect in the judicious exercise of the immense power thus conferred, the penalty will be visited upon him in the shape of bodily and mental sufferings endured by his offspring as the direct and inevitable consequence of such neglect—let him be well and thoroughly convinced of all this—and he becomes a most efficient and intelligent promoter of every institution for popular education. Add to this a conviction that nine-tenths of all the children of the Republic in which he lives, receives the greater part of their intellectual (we cannot say their physical and moral) education in the primary institutions of learning—that his own children must, throughout their future life, breathe the atmosphere of a public opinion to be formed and sustained by those whose mental discipline is thus matured, and that by the influence which he may exert, in connection with those by whom he is surrounded, those institutions, instead of being nurseries of idleness, immorality, or at best of barren elementary instruction, may become the temples wherein the beaming innocence of spotless childhood may be clothed with knowledge and wisdom and virtue, day by day and hour by hour, without parting with its sinless purity of nature; let these facts and these principles be impressed upon the mind of the most selfish and worldly man, community contains within its bosom, and he becomes a practical reformer in the much abused and greatly perverted system of Common School Education.

We are accustomed to complain that in a great majority of instances, our Primary Schools are lamentably inefficient—that they have utterly failed to accomplish the objects for which they were designed—that they have miserably disappointed the hopes and expectations which were formed from their introduction and diffusion broad-cast throughout our land. But we forget to ask—whence arises this deplorable state of things—and, what is still more culpable, we neglect to inquire, whether the remedy is in our power, and if so, what it is. If the husbandman should sow his field in every direction with the choicest grain, and should thenceforth abandon it to its fate, or at best look on with a cool indifference and neglect to its progress, should we be surprised at the comparative failure and inefficiency of his crop? True, the founders of our institutions were at immense pains in laying broad and deep the foundations of primary instruction; and had their descendants faithfully and conscientiously co-operated in their enlightened views in this respect, and carried up the superstructure in its admirable and beautiful proportions, our country would have been advanced at least a century, in all those intellectual and moral qualifications, which adorn humanity. But the eager prosecution of wealth—the active spirit of speculation—the immense variety of material interests necessarily incidental to the development of the vast resources of a rapidly expanding civilization in a mighty hemisphere, hitherto comparatively unpeopled—and the diversified combinations resulting from the pressing claims of self-interest, and personal and political ambition—all these predominating motives, impelled to a course of action, and originated and maintained a public sentiment essentially independent of the claims of primary education, as that term is now beginning to be understood. The common schools, the high schools, the academy, the college and the university, all, indeed, existed. Outwardly their organization was as perfect as circumstances would admit. For successive generations, the greater part of the children of the republic were duly transferred from the nursery to the district or free school—thence at the proper time to the high school and the academy, and finally “finished their education” at the college or

the university. For all the active and practical purposes of life, they were thenceforth deemed abundantly prepared. In all this routine, thus universally followed, and universally countenanced, the two most important and predominating divisions of our nature—those which give the hue to the whole of future life, and determine its destination—the physical and moral attributes—formed no part of the discipline of education, and only occasionally entered into it, when by a fortunate concurrence of events, the strong common sense and wholesome training of the domestic circle was taken up and carried on in the halls of science. The intellectual faculties were indeed principally developed—but in the general absence of sound moral aliment on which to act, the higher sentiments were left to take such direction as the propensities and appetites might suggest, controlled only by the operations of a public sentiment, which, however it might restrain within due bounds the grosser and more violent passions, admitted full latitude to the play of many of the lower attributes of our nature. In short, our systems of popular education from the lowest to the highest, for more than a century past, have been little better than mere systems—beautiful in theory—affording felicitous subjects for self-gratulation at our public anniversaries, but essentially destitute of that living principle, which acts upon, and elevates and refines, to its greatest possible degree, the physical, the intellectual, the moral and religious faculties. L. S. R.

To be continued.

#### THE TEACHER'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

“The whole world is a school of mutual instruction. The child is receiving lessons from every one around him; and with the natural proneness of the human heart to evil, the lessons of evil are unhappily too soon learned. To exert a counteracting influence—to plant the thistly garden of the human mind with the seeds of knowledge and virtue—to water from the full fountain of affection, and to direct the shooting of the young ideas—is the teacher's province.

And where is the teacher who will say this is not a field of sufficient responsibility and sufficient importance for the exertion of his noblest faculties and for the exercise of his most aspiring views? Let such turn from the drudgery of the school-room and seek a station of greater ease and richer emolument. But it is an object high enough for my ambition to be a successful instructor of the young, to be instrumental in guiding immortal minds in the way of usefulness and happiness, and in the way to HEAVEN. There is an elevation in this noble work towards which I have been constantly aiming but which I have never attained; and if my ability to be useful were increased a hundred fold, I feel that it could all be profitably exerted within these walls. The teacher's compensation ought to be such that he can feel at rest in devoting himself wholly to his work.

Let us look for a moment at some of the responsibilities that cluster round the teacher in the midst of his pupils. Whatever helps he may have, his own attention will be necessary in securing the certainty of a healthful and pleasant atmosphere for the pupils at the morning hour of school. This is of the first importance, for their intellectual, physical and moral welfare is concerned in it. The intellectual advancement of the young should not be purchased at the expense of health and happiness. Thus far his task is easy; and if he have spent an hour or two in preparing pens or lessons for the day, it is all easy, for inanimate matter yields readily to skill and industry. But how is the scene changed when at a given signal, the seats are occupied with intelligent persons in the freshness of youth, each countenance animated with a soul of more value than the wealth of empires, each possessing a mind to which no researches have ever yet set limits—a mind that will be influenced by the events of this day towards a career of usefulness or a course of evil; and around whose moral and intellectual powers are clustering habits that love to coil around and fatten on the faculties they are holding captive. Here too, mingled with the loveliness of youth is all its waywardness; and in hearts that should be the resting place of Piety and Truth, “falsehood is bound up.” Will any one say that with these habits and this soul the teacher has nothing to do? Sad indeed were the condition of the most intelligent youth, no matter how high in intellectual attainments, if enslaved to corrupt and vicious habits. And I should tremble in view of meeting these pupils in the judgment, if I neglected for a single day to direct their young minds to the great object and end of their

existence, and to its great Author. And though like Socrates I were accused of corrupting the youth, and doomed to drink hemlock, I would rather suffer martyrdom in attempting to benefit my fellow creatures, than to live to lure souls down to perdition. Now in the midst of his pupils with a desire to help each one along a little in the way of learning, to aid them in the important art of self control, and in the discipline of the mental powers, in short to aid their advancement in whatever is amiable and lovely and of good report—the faithful teacher will surely find his attention so engrossed that the hours will pass full rapidly away.

To govern a school well is probably the most difficult part of a teacher's work, and that undoubtedly is best governed which has the least show of government, with the most of industry and order. As to the peculiar manner of managing and conducting a school, every teacher has his own method, and, for him, his own method is generally best.

Many grave discussions have been had on the use of the rod in school; and many intelligent men are decidedly opposed to it. The question probably will not soon be settled, but this I think is a safe proposition: A school should be governed without corporal punishment if possible, but at any rate discipline must be maintained.

It would be a pleasant, a delightful task to aid young minds in the pursuit of knowledge, if they could be induced to practise the highly important art of self-control. And I know of nothing more elevating and ennobling to character. But the most favorable situation for viewing a school, under entire and perfect self-control is in a quiet room, where we may read about it in a book. For let thirty or fifty or one hundred youth be brought together in any part of the world, and the teacher in looking around on them will often enough have occasion, in regard to some of them at least, to adopt the language of Moses and with a sigh exclaim, *O that they were wise.*—*Extract from an Address given before the Teacher's Society of Troy, by XENOPHON HAYWOOD.*

#### PRACTICAL LESSON.

##### MODE OF USING NEWSPAPERS IN SCHOOLS.

##### NO. III.

It has been more than once proposed that newspapers should be introduced into our schools. Their indiscriminate use would be far from profitable; but the following extract from Alcott's ‘Historical Description of the First Public School in Hartford’ illustrates a method of conducting this exercise, which cannot fail to do good.

“Scholars, what is the latest news from Europe? ‘The British Parliament is prorogued.’ Prorogued! what does that mean? ‘Adjourned.’ Who did this? ‘Who prorogued the Parliament?’ ‘The king.’ Who is the king of Great Britain? ‘William IV.’ Is he a popular king? ‘Yes.’ What do you mean by popular? ‘In favor with the people.’ Why did the king prorogue the Parliament? ‘Because he was friendly to the Reform Bill.’ And who are opposed to that Bill? ‘The Peers, or House of Lords.’ How many houses are there in the British Parliament? ‘Two.’ What are they called? ‘The House of Lords, and the House of Commons.’

How has the war between Russia and Poland terminated? ‘The Russians have taken Warsaw, and conquered Poland.’ ‘What is to become of Poland now?’ ‘It will probably come under the yoke of Russia again.’ Who has most distinguished himself in this war? ‘The Polish General, Skryzencecki.’

What was the last news from Greece? ‘The Count Capo d'Istria had been assassinated.’ Who was Count Capo d'Istria? ‘The President of Greece.’ Is Greece in Asia? ‘No, sir.’ Where is it then? ‘In the Southern part of Europe.’

What is the most important news in the United States? ‘Congress has just assembled at Washington.’ For what purpose does Congress meet? ‘To make laws.’ Of whom does Congress consist? ‘How many Senators from each State; and how often appointed? How many Representatives, and how long do they hold their office?’

This will serve as a specimen of the method of studying newspapers. The plan is rather novel, and well calculated to excite a taste for reading, and a love for general information. But this is not all.—The conversation about Poland and Greece, engenders a desire in the minds of the pupils to understand the geography and history of those countries, and of those near them, to which they sustain important relations. The history and geography thus taught, will hardly ever be forgotten.



## ADVERTISEMENTS.

TO THE VISITERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS,  
heretofore appointed by the Superintendent.

THE great benefits derived from the examination of the Schools by the Visitors who performed that duty the last year, have been so signal and manifest, that the Superintendent would earnestly and respectfully request the gentlemen already appointed for that purpose, to renew their inspections during the present year. A copy of the Reports of the Visitors will be forwarded by the 1st of July, to the respective County Clerks, addressed to each Visitor who subscribed any report, which will be delivered on application to the Clerks. These reports will suggest new subjects of enquiry, and, frequently, improved modes of conducting the examinations, and stating the results.

It is also respectfully suggested to the respective Visitors, that by drawing up the results of their observation for the present year, in a series of connected remarks, instead of a tabular form, in the mode adopted in the Abstracts given in the Report, as nearly as may be, much time and labor will be saved, as well to themselves, as to this Department.

Where there are any vacancies in the Boards, or where it would be advisable to increase the number, additional appointments will be made upon the representation of the Board, or of any of the Visitors.

In the following Counties, no Visitors have as yet been appointed, from the want of proper information respecting the persons who would be suitable and willing to act: Albany, Adirondack, Chautauque, Chemung, Fulton, Hamilton, Lewis, Madison, Rockland, Sullivan, Warren, Wayne and Yates.

In the following Counties, Visitors have been appointed, but not a sufficient number to visit all the Schools: Broome, Cattaraugus, Chenango, Otsego, Rensselaer, Columbia, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Greene, Jefferson, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Ulster and Washington.

The Superintendent will be happy to avail himself of any information which may be given by gentlemen in the above named Counties, to enable him to appoint the necessary Visitors for those Counties. It is hoped that a consideration of the great advantages which must result to the Schools, and to the successful operation of the system, by the gratuitous inspection of gentlemen of known character and intelligence, will induce all who feel an interest in a subject of such vital importance, to take the necessary measures to have full Boards of Visitors appointed for their Counties, and will influence those who may be selected to undertake the task.

JOHN C. SPENCER, Superintendent.  
Office of Superintendent of Common Schools,  
ALBANY, June 18, 1840.

## HARPER'S SCHOOL DISTRICT LIBRARY.

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FROM THE HON. JOHN C. SPENCER, SECRETARY OF  
STATE AND SUPERINTENDENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS.

Office of Superintendent of Common Schools,  
Albany, October 30, 1839.

## Messrs. HARPER &amp; BROTHERS:

Gentlemen: I have received the SECOND SERIES of the SCHOOL DISTRICT LIBRARY, published by you, and have carefully examined it. It gives me great pleasure to express my entire approbation of the books individually, and of the selection as a whole. A large number of excellent books may be easily found in our language; but to select only a small number of forty or fifty in reference to the wants and taste of the community, so that they shall embrace subjects sufficiently various to interest and yet impart the largest amount of instruction, is a task of much difficulty. This you have accomplished. And I feel bound to say, that I consider this series superior to any other collection, for the same purpose, within my knowledge. While you have consulted novelty by having some original works, you have not sacrificed utility, but have studied to promote it. The cheap price at which it is afforded is, I believe, entirely unparalleled. No person who purchases it, either for a district circulating library or for his own family use, will ever regret the bargain.

I cannot forbear acknowledging the spirit and enterprise which have carried on and completed the publication of these books in time to enable the school districts to procure them before the navigation of the canals is closed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN C. SPENCER.

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—Messrs. VAN BRUNT & SON, of Geneva, are the Agents for the publication and sale of the above Works. July 1, 1840.

## VAN BRUNT &amp; SON,

BOOKSELLERS & STATIONERS, having purchased of J. N. ROBERT his stock of BOOKS, STATIONARY, &c., offer for sale at the old stand, a general assortment of School, Classical, Medical and Miscellaneous Books & STATIONARY, Bibles, Prayer Books, Psalm and Hymn Books, Sunday School Books, from the American Episcopal and Methodist Unions, at their prices. A large stock of Writing and Letter PAPER, ruled and plain. Harper's District School Library, in cases constantly on hand. Geneva, July 1, 1840.

THE CONDITIONS OF HAPPINESS IN  
TEACHING.

There are conditions of happiness in a school, as well as in every other situation in life; and if these conditions be not observed, neither peace nor comfort can be found within its precincts. Permit me to enumerate some of them.

The first is, *ability to govern by moral means.* In a school it is of course necessary to *resolve to rule*; but this is not all that is necessary. Children are, to a much greater extent than is generally supposed, reasonable and intelligent beings; they are just as much influenced by *motives* as adults; and they must be governed very much in the same way. All men love power, especially *moral power*. The exercise of this kind of power, or what we call *influence*, is universally grateful; the intensity, the exquisiteness of the enjoyment depending upon the number of minds which can be influenced; the perfection or dominant character of the influence itself; and the difficulties which have been surmounted,—the skill that has been exercised,—the amount of *mind* which has been brought to bear, in its attainment.

Now this particular kind of gratification, the able teacher enjoys in the highest perfection. His school is the field of his enterprise; in proportion to his skill and ingenuity in managing human nature, is the extent of his success; and in that success he finds an immediate and rich reward. To lead, simply by the power of his own mind, a hundred other minds in willing captivity; to turn the very waywardness and restlessness of childhood to the accomplishment of his own matured plans and purposes; and to do all this without crushing the buoyancy of one spirit, or checking the flow of natural gladness in any one heart, is a triumph and a joy abundantly compensating the toil and care by which it has been effected.

The second condition of happiness in a school, is *benevolence*. That was a beautiful saying of Dr. Dwight, "*He that makes a little child happy for half an hour is a co-worker with God.*" It precisely expresses the spirit which pervades the bosom of a happy teacher. He loves his work just because he delights in the exercise of the benevolent affections. His school-room is a happy place, because it is the theatre of his good will,—the place where his kindest and best feelings are developed and exercised. He has emotions there into which "a stranger cannot enter." His relationship to it, is distinct from that which belongs to any other locality.

A third condition of happiness, is *unflinching faith in the efficacy of early instruction as a means of moral regeneration*. On this point there should be no misgivings. Whatever others may think, the teacher must be satisfied, that any great moral change in the community, will be mainly effected by the instrumentality of schools; that this is God's appointed way of spreading sacred and salutary influences throughout the whole community.

Reflect, I pray you, on the peculiar facilities which are afforded by your particular position, not only for doing good, but for doing it most extensively? Is it no advantage to turn up the yet unbroken soil, and to sow the first seeds? Is it nothing, to hold in your hand a chain of communication, linking your mind, not merely with a hundred other minds, but with all the minds that through all time shall ever be influenced by those who received their earliest impressions from you?—Is it no special honor to be the servant of the feeblest, the most inexperienced, and the most helpless?—to stand at the portico, as it were, of the temple of God, keeping the house, and guarding it from pollution? And is all this arrangement of Providence subservient to no end? Is it productive of no good result?

Subordinate, indeed, to these essential elements of happiness, yet still materially affecting the degree of comfort which a teacher will enjoy in his school, are two other qualifications, which may just be hinted at. The first is, the *ability to interest children*; not only to make them happy, but happy in the performance of duty. The second is, *competent information*; by which I mean, not merely the possession of just sufficient knowledge to conduct the school, but such a complete and accurate acquaintance on the part of the teacher, with the elements of that which he has to teach, as shall give him the perfect mastery of all its parts, and unlimited confidence in the correctness of his instructions. Any branch of science which is not thus known, is not our own; it must be ranked among the lands that are yet to be possessed. No man can clearly and simply explain to a child, any thing with which he is not himself perfectly acquainted.

To illustrate successfully much more is necessary; a considerable share of information on many subjects is essential to success in this department. A good

teacher knows and feels this, and since all knowledge is congruous, he is always on the look-out for materials of instruction. It is thus he learns his own ignorance. The further he advances, the more he finds how necessary it is, that he who undertakes to teach others, should take time to prepare himself.

One other observation. No man can be happy as a teacher, who is not prepared to devote all his powers to the performance of its duties. Fellenberg does not ask too much, in demanding for this office, "a vigilance that never sleeps, a perseverance that never tires." \* \* \* The motto of Luther, "Work on earth, and rest in heaven," must be the motto of every faithful school-master; and he who is not prepared to live and act in this spirit, had better leave the service to warmer hearts and nobler minds. Such a man will never know any thing of the elevated delights which associate themselves with the employment; he may have the drudgery, but he will not find the pleasures of the exercise; he belongs to that class, of whom Fenelon beautifully says, in relation to another (and yet not another) service, "They perceive what it deprives them of, but they do not see what it bestows; they exaggerate its sacrifices, without looking at its consolations."

#### "DIDAKTIK," OR THE ART OF COMMUNICATING.

By this word (*didaktik*), which the Germans have adopted from the Greek, I wish you to understand, the art of teaching; as distinguished on the one hand, from their *methodik*, or science of methods; and on the other from their *pädagogik*, or science of education; of which the art of communicating is only one part or division. You will readily perceive that it is an attainment perfectly distinct from any particular plan or system; and also a very different thing from what is usually termed *fact* in teaching. It is in fact, the art of so communicating knowledge, that the pupil shall, as far as possible, comprehend in all its relations, the truth sought to be imparted; and that, associating what is thus received, with other and previous acquisitions, he may be led at one and the same time, to cultivate his original faculties, and to store his mind richly and permanently with valuable facts. This is what I mean by "the art of teaching," a talent which few naturally possess, but which may doubtless be acquired by the careful and diligent study of the human mind, in connection with a moderate share of "practice."

#### SPELLING.

We learn to spell, chiefly, if not exclusively, in order that we may be able to write correctly; that method, therefore, which will most speedily and effectually enable us to carry the relative situations of the letters in the mind, so that whenever we wish to express our thoughts on paper, we can do so without misplacing them, is certainly the best. Now, as writing a word is a slower operation than orally spelling it; and as the mind is obliged in that exercise to dwell longer on the relative situation of every letter, than it is in mere pronunciation, the orthography of the word must be more deeply impressed on the memory by writing, than it can be in any other way. When, therefore, the learner has become able to write, this mode of teaching him to spell should by no means be neglected.

"Reading should invariably precede spelling. I do not mean that the child should be kept a long time in learning to read, before he commences spelling; but that he should never be set to spell a word until he has first become able readily to read it. The reason is, that reading is much easier than spelling, and that a person cannot spell by thinking how a word sounds, but he must recollect how it looks. The eye, therefore, as well as the ear, must become familiar with a word, before it can readily be spelled. One thing that renders reading easier than spelling, is, that perception is more vivid and distinct than conception. Hence it is easier to distinguish two similar words, as *cat* and *rat*, or *eat* and *tea*, when the eye is fixed upon them in reading, than it is to recollect the difference in their orthography, when they are absent from the eye."

The plan pursued at the model school in the Borough Road, which plan is fully explained in the Manual of the society, is perhaps the best that can be devised.

"The spelling lessons, which are printed in both roman and italic type, to exercise the children in reading various characters, exhibit a two-fold arrangement. The names of things are arranged under various heads, such as trades, measures, vegetables, quadrupeds, clothing, fruit, medicine, flowers, birds, &c.; and columns of other words are placed alphabetically. The last fifteen lessons of the set consist

of a selection of words, approximating in sound, but different in spelling and signification. They embrace the principal orthographical irregularities of the language. The whole set consists of sixty folio lessons, containing, besides four alphabets, nearly six thousand words; selected primarily for the purpose of communicating a complete knowledge of English orthography, and revised with the design of including a very extensive range of useful knowledge, and inducing habits of observation and inquiry. The plan of teaching is invariable throughout the series; the pupils are expected to spell, read, and explain every word. Suppose, for instance, the word to be "he." The first boy would say he—he; and the second boy would, without giving a regular definition, express his sense of its meaning. He may be supposed to say, "him," or "not me;" or, putting it in a sentence, say, "he is here." Any answer which indicates a knowledge of the word should be accepted, however homely, either in language or illustration. The same remark applies to all the definitions they give; if the idea be correctly received, repeated demands for explanation will soon lead to more suitable language and more correct definitions. The two principal points to be attained by the pupil, are, the comprehension of the meaning of the term, and the power of expressing that meaning in suitable language.

"The meanings of the words in the alphabetical columns which are generally derivative, the pupils learn by being exercised in separating the prefixes and affixes, and then tracing the root through other combinations. For instance, the word '*retrospection*;' the monitor would say, 'Separate it,' and the boys would reply, *retro*, behind, *spect*, look, and *tion*, act or action. He would then say, 'What is the meaning of the word *retrospection*?' and he would ask for other instances in which the root occurs. In-spect, pro-spect, spect-acle, circum-spect, and other words would be given."

The advantages of this system of interrogation are numerous and weighty. It teaches even the youngest child to apply every word as it is brought before him, from his earliest acquaintance with a written or printed language. It leads the mind direct from the words to the legitimate use of them, the communication of ideas. By inducing the child to draw on the resources of its own mind, it teaches him to compare, to discriminate, to judge; a process by which he is rendered capable of far greater mental exertion. It necessarily ensures a habit of observation and scrutinizing inquiry; it occasions close application; and it constantly calls upon the master rather to restrain than to excite.

#### READING.

It has often been observed, (and certainly not without sufficient reason) that very few persons read well! To read simply and naturally, with animation and expression, is indeed a high and rare attainment. What is generally called *good reading*, is, in fact, the very worst kind of reading; I mean, that which calls the attention of the auditor from the subject of the discourse to the supposed taste and skill of the person who is pronouncing it. The best window is that which least intercepts the prospect; and he is the best reader who brings before us the mind of the author, unencumbered by the tints and tracery of his own style and manner. Still, it must be remembered that with most persons reading is an art. The best readers are those who have most diligently studied their art—studied it so well that you do not perceive that they have studied it all. You so thoroughly understand, and so sensibly feel the force of what they say, that they never think for a moment how they are saying it; and you never know the exact extent of your obligation to the care and labor of the elocutionist. In many schools, little can be done beyond teaching the pupil to read in a plain and intelligent manner—to pronounce with general correctness, and to avoid offensive tones. You may probably wish to have a few rules, by attention to which this degree of proficiency may, in most cases, be secured. I will only mention four.

1. Take care that the pupil thoroughly understands that which he is directed to read. This is absolutely essential to his success. If he do not fully comprehend the thought, how can he be expected adequately to express the language in which it may be clothed? Attention to this point is just as important in the lowest as in the highest class. Indeed, it is there, in the lowest class, that the habit of fully comprehending in the mind that which is presented to the eye must be formed. The great evil of putting before children unmeaning combinations of letters, such as "bla, ble, bli, blo, blu," and all the rest of this ridic-

ulous tribe, is, that in reading them, a habit is formed of separating the sight and sound of words from sense, a habit which frequently cleaves to the mind long after the days of childhood have passed away: If therefore you would have a sentence well read, read so as to be understood and felt by the hearer, take care that the reader himself both understands and feels it. The progress of your pupils, too, will by this means be greatly facilitated. "He who is taught the habit of carrying the sense along with the sound, is armed with two forces instead of one, to grapple with the difficulties he encounters—the one, his knowledge of the letters and syllables, and the other, his knowledge of the story."

2. Remember that the tones and emphasis which we use in conversation are those which form the basis of good elocution. Children should therefore be instructed to read as they talk. How often do you find young people describing with an ease and vivacity which is truly charming, events which, if read by them in the very same terms, from a book, would be insufferably dull and uninteresting.

3. Guard your pupils against rapidity and loudness. A rapid and noisy reader is of all others the most disagreeable, and, at the same time, the most unintelligible. Insist therefore upon a slow and distinct enunciation of every word; without securing which, it will be impossible to obtain correct pronunciation, good emphasis, or suitable intonation. Slow reading in a subdued tone of voice, is always most agreeable and impressive; in the reading of the Holy Scripture, the boisterous fluency which ignorant persons so frequently applaud, is irreverent and offensive.

4. Do not permit too much to be read at one time.—A good teacher can profitably occupy twenty or thirty minutes over a page, without at all wearing his children. He will often say, "I perceive you do not quite understand that passage; read it again." Then he will require definitions of the leading words, their synonyms and their opposites. Then perhaps he will have the sentence analyzed or paraphrased; and after this, he will thoroughly explain every incidental allusion, whether geographical, historical or biographical, which may be involved in the passage.—All this, it may be, must be done before that which is read can be thoroughly understood, and he knows (to return to the point whence we set out) that until it is understood it can never be properly read.—From Duan's School Teacher's Manual.

#### QUESTION I.

BY Z. Z.

What arc is that when the fluxion of its tangent is  $n$  times that of the sine?

#### QUESTION II.

Wanting to know the depth of a well or pit, I let fall a stone into it, and counted 10 seconds of time from the instant the stone began to fall, to the time the sound of its striking the bottom reached the ear. Required the depth of the pit?

To J. F., Esq. The PLAN for reorganizing the Boards of Inspectors, needs explanation. If it is the best, no communication will be more welcome.—Would it not be well to submit it to the Superintendent?

#### NOBLE SENTIMENT.

"I have been the tutor of princes," said the friend of Silvio Pellico, "I am now ambitious to rise to the elevation of a schoolmaster to the poor." If that noble sentiment found a cordial response in British bosoms, I should say of England, "the day of her deliverance draweth nigh." But it does not meet with such response, and it never will, until the moral power which yet slumbers in our schools, is, in a far greater degree than heretofore, recognized, developed, and sanctified. The improvement of education will alone lead to its extension.—Eng. Pa.

HARPER'S DISTRICT SCHOOL LIBRARY.—The Trustees of the Common Schools, and others on whom may devolve the duty of procuring School District Libraries, will do well, where Libraries may be required the coming winter, to have their orders left with the booksellers or agents of the publishers, immediately, so that there may be no disappointments from not obtaining them before the close of navigation. Last year the negligence of the proper officers induced not a little dissatisfaction in districts where Libraries were not received. Country journalists will do their readers essential service by calling attention to the subject. Two series, comprising one hundred volumes, have been already published, and a third of fifty volumes will be ready in a few weeks. The selection of works for the Library is made under the direction of the Superintendent of Common Schools; they have uniformly received the strongest testimonials of approval from persons best qualified to judge of their excellence; and they are sold at a price below that of any similar publication ever printed.—New Yorker.

Printed by Stow & Frazee, Job Printers, Geneva.